

Ending Homelessness in Canada

Correspondence and notes from meetings with

**Claudette Bradshaw, Minister
Responsible for Homelessness Issues,
Government of Canada**

and the

Toronto Disaster Relief Committee

March to July 1999

Compiled by J David Hulchanski, Professor, University of Toronto, 1999

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw
Place du Portage Phase II
11th Floor, 165 Hôtel de Ville Street
Hull, Quebec K1A 0J2

SENT VIA FAX: 819-994-5168

March 23, 1999

Dear Ms. Bradshaw,

The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) congratulates you in your new appointment as Minister Responsible for Homeless Issues. We look forward to working with you closely to end the National Homeless Disaster in Canada. The TDRC is a group of committed Canadians advocating to end homelessness in Canada. Over 400 organizations, including the Big City Mayors' Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Federal Caucus of the National Democratic Party, and 1200 individuals have endorsed our declaration of the homelessness emergency in Canada as a National Disaster, requiring emergency humanitarian relief.

As is the case in any national disaster, it is customary for a country's leaders to visit the disaster site in order to underline the seriousness of the situation and to generate public sympathy towards its victims. This applies to the national and provincial leaders of the political parties, all Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliaments, and all other elected officials. An invitation to come to Toronto has been extended to the Prime Minister and we await his response. An invitation was also extended to all Members of Parliament and Senators. So far, we have welcomed Alexa McDonough and Libby Davies, MP (Vancouver-East) from the federal level, and Howard Hampton from the provincial level, and have taken them on a tour of some of the Disaster's sites in this city.

It is in this spirit that the TDRC invites you to visit the sites of this National Disaster, both in your own jurisdiction and in Toronto, one of its major sites. We invite you to tour the Toronto sites with us later this week, when you come to Toronto to attend the National Symposium on Housing and Homelessness.

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TORONTO DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

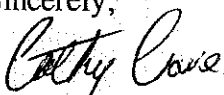
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www.tao.ca/~tdrc/

As in any National Disaster, there are many problems that arise. There are many people now suffering in the shelter system that need permanent, appropriate and affordable housing. Daily, these people face hunger and malnutrition, an increased risk of violence, communicable diseases and compulsive drug use, and deteriorating mental and emotional health. The homelessness disaster is worsening daily at an alarming rate, as the factors creating it remain unchecked. Any delay in firmly and massively responding will only compound the present crisis of suffering and death - a crisis which is already a disaster of epidemic proportions which no civilized society should tolerate. At least nine homeless people, including the man on the grate outside Queen's Park, have died in Toronto alone this year. A pregnant woman froze to death in Ottawa earlier this month. You must visit the sites of this disaster immediately!

The TDRC is also advocating for a national housing strategy. Homelessness is first and foremost a housing issue and its end will only be achieved by working constructively and committedly in this context. As you are aware, Canada remains the only developed country not to have a national housing policy. This is unacceptable. Housing its people is clearly a government responsibility and we demand that the federal government return to the provision of social housing. To this end we put forth the **One Percent Solution**. The One Percent Solution requires that the total amount of annual spending on housing, across all levels of government throughout Canada, be increased by an additional 1%. Accompanying this letter you will find our One Percent Solution Letter-Writing Campaign. We urge you to support the One Percent Solution and use it as a starting point to develop real federal commitments to funding for social housing across the country.

The time to act is now! To make arrangements for your tour of the Homeless Disaster, or for more information on the One Percent Solution, please contact the TDRC at 416-703-8482, x411 (Kira Heineck).

Sincerely,



Cathy Crowe,
The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee

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TORONTO DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

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Minister
of Human Resources
Development



Ministre
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des ressources humaines

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

Ms. Cathy Crowe
Toronto Disaster Relief Committee
c/o 168 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2R4

FEB 12 1999

Dear Ms. Crowe:

The Office of the Prime Minister forwarded to me on December 7, 1998, a copy of your correspondence with respect to the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee's report, *State of Emergency Declaration*. I appreciate your taking the time to bring the report to our attention as well as the Committee's efforts to help alleviate the plight of homeless people.

Let me begin by saying that homelessness is of great concern to the Government of Canada and there are a number of federal programs that either directly or indirectly assist homeless people. Officials at Human Resources Development Canada and other federal departments, including the Department of National Defence, and Public Works and Government Services, have been reviewing how best to respond to the urgent needs now that winter has arrived. As you have also written to the Honourable Alfonso Gagliano, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, he will be able to detail the set of initiatives he has been working on to address this serious situation.

I also wish to add that the Government of Canada is working on a variety of fronts to address the longer-term issue of poverty so that homelessness does not become a consideration for Canadians. A series of initiatives in the most recent federal budgets are specifically aimed at helping the most vulnerable and low-income Canadians.

For example, we have introduced improvements to tax laws that will encourage charitable donations, and put food banks and shelters on an equal footing with larger organizations that have Crown foundation status. As a result, the voluntary sector now has a powerful set of tools for raising the funds they need. Of course, our aim is to help prevent the need to use food banks and shelters from arising

Canada

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The 1997 budget took another major step forward through a contribution of roughly \$100 million per year toward Canadians with disabilities. An Opportunities Fund providing \$30 million a year for three years is providing tax relief to help offset the cost of living with disability and is designed to increase the integration of people with disabilities into the economies of their communities, in short, help individuals get jobs. Another \$12.6 million supports the work of voluntary sector non-governmental organizations, particularly those working with the disability community. The 1998 federal budget introduced tax credits totalling \$635 million a year for disability and medical expenses and announced a new special tax credit for caregivers.

The Government of Canada is also taking a variety of measures to help alleviate the plight of low-income families with children through a substantial investment of funds. For example, the 1997 federal budget announced an \$850 million per year increase by the Government of Canada to the Canada Child Tax Benefit for low-income families. Last year's federal budget committed an additional \$850 million per year. This will bring the total federal increase in this initiative for low-income families to \$1.7 billion per year by July 2000. It is important to note that both increases are in addition to the \$5.1 billion in income support we currently provide to families with children.

As part of the initiative, the Government of Canada will assume an increased responsibility for income support for children through the Canada Child Tax Benefit and create a solid platform on which the provinces and territories will provide complementary benefits and services for children in low-income families.

The system represents an important step in removing obstacles that families face in their quest to improve their circumstances. However, it is only part of our response to reducing child poverty: our government is also pursuing with our provincial and territorial partners further measures to enhance healthy child development. Through a National Children's Agenda, governments will work to provide an integrated and holistic approach to advance the well-being of Canadian children. To date, preliminary plans have been discussed among both orders of government to coordinate the work of social services and health ministries towards the new strategy. Our aim is to give all children in Canada the best possible chance to develop their full potential, and I am hopeful that this agenda will become a focal point for governmental and non-governmental efforts to that end.

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In addition, the Government of Canada has announced \$100 million in increased funding over the next three years for the Community Action Program for Children and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program. These programs fund community voluntary organizations across Canada that deliver services to address the development needs of young children who are at risk and address the problem of low birth weight babies among high-risk groups.

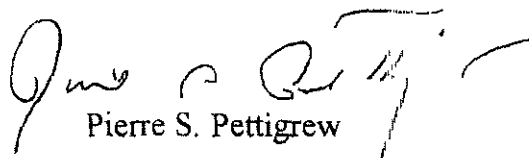
To further address the situation of Canadian families in need, over the last several years, the Department of Human Resources Development has developed strategic initiatives with provincial governments which support the needs of low-income families. In partnership with the provinces and territories, these initiatives test new and innovative approaches to income security measures, employment opportunities and training.

To provide additional help to Canadians in need, last year's federal budget announced lower taxes for those who can least afford to pay them. On July 1, 1998, the amount of tax-free income that low- and middle-income Canadians can receive was increased. This has taken 400,000 Canadians off the tax rolls entirely and given relief to another 4.6 million taxpayers.

Although it seems that the problem of homelessness is more severe than usual this year, it is very much a long-term issue. While the matter is predominantly under provincial and municipal jurisdictions, I can assure you that we will continue to look for ways that we can work in partnership with the affected provinces and municipalities to minimize the number of homeless individuals now and in the future. We are also doing everything we possibly can to help Canadians find stable jobs so that they no longer have to live in poverty.

In closing, I would like to say that I very much welcome the views of concerned Canadians as we work to find solutions to this serious situation. Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Pierre S. Pettigrew

Minister of Labour



Ministre du Travail

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J2

JUN - 1 1999

Ms. Cathy Crowe
Toronto Disaster Relief Committee
c/o 168 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2R4

Dear Ms. Crowe:

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien has recently forwarded a copy of your correspondence dated February 1, 1999.

Let me begin by saying that homelessness is of great concern to the Government of Canada and we wish to ensure that our actions continue to reflect the values of a caring society. That is why it is my intention to visit communities across Canada to see, first-hand, the differing needs that contribute to the problem of homelessness across the country. Clearly, differing problems require their own solutions and interventions.

I very much appreciate your invitation to meet on this matter of importance. I have received a heavy volume of similar invitations, which I will consider along with yours.

Please be assured that I will continue to look for ways that we can work in partnership with the affected provinces and municipalities to minimize the number of homeless individuals now and in the future.

Once again, my thanks for the courtesy of your invitation.

Sincerely,

Claudette Bradshaw

Canada

TORONTO DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

Notes for 31 June 99 Toronto Meeting with Claudette Bradshaw, Federal Minister Responsible for Homelessness

Representing TDRC:

David Walsh, *Businessman and Realtor, Realco Property Management*

David Hulchanski, *Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto*

Cathy Crowe, *Street Nurse, Central Toronto Community Health Centre*

Michael Shapcott, *Manager of Government Relations, Co-operative Housing
Federation of Canada - Ontario Region*

PROPOSED AGENDA:

1. Clarification (of 3 issues / positions)
 - A) Are we working together on this?
 - B) What are your goals -- the 'big picture'?
 - C) What happens to the 'findings' of your tour?
2. Information
 - A) National Disaster Relief network has been established
 - B) Human Rights Violations: Court challenge coming
 - C) Fall & Winter: More human suffering

1. CLARIFY Issues and Positions

A) Are we working together on this?

We want to clarify some statements in the *Moncton Times & Transcript*, July 20 and 21

□ **The reference to 'Special interest groups':**

take a tough stand against special interest groups in Toronto; esp. TDRC (July 21)

- Aren't we on the same side? Can't we work together?
- At the March HLN Summit: 'You need us & we need you'
- We know the issue thoroughly; we are not newcomers to the problem.
- Either you are part of the solution; or you are in the way.

The KEY ISSUE here: a constructive working relationship between government and democratic grassroots organizations. The choice is up to you. This is a Canadian issue, not a partisan issue. All Canadians ought to be working together in a democratic and open process.

□ **The reference to Parliamentary hearings:**

Is your government's promise to the UN being misrepresented? Just another study?

e.g.: "Bradshaw said enough studies have already been done on the subject." (20 July)

- We are not calling for yet another study!
- The UN Human Rights Committee is not calling for yet another study
- What kind of democracy runs from (prevents) open, free discussion?
- What kind of government refuses to honour promises?

The KEY ISSUE here: a democratic discussion on prevention and elimination strategies leading to action.

- There is no need to delay any new initiatives.
- In any human disaster, you act fast with the best available remedial measures; at the same time you develop the plan to end the disaster and prevent a similar recurrence.
- A democracy does this in an open democratic fashion.

B) What are *your* GOALS – the ‘big picture’ ?

- OUR GOALS: (1) Prevent further HLN; and (2) Eliminate mass HLN.
- HOW: HL people need: (1) adequate housing; (2) some need support services; (3) all need enough money to live on (good jobs or adequate social assistance).
- HOW FEASIBLE: Canada has one of the most successful economies on earth: this can be done in 3 to 5 years. If the most severely destitute HL population numbers about 50,000, this is only 0.15% of Canada's population.
- PROGRAMS: You continually mention the need to identify “gaps” in programs.
 - We did not have this kind of mass HLN when most programs were initiated.
 - Some policies and programs are in part responsible for the current mass HLN.
- HIGHLIGHT SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS: A successful 'tour' and related research should help Canadians not only know there are gaps, but that there are many successful though inadequately resourced programs right across the country.
 - Example -- Social Housing Supply: In housing, for example, the post-1973 amendments to the National Housing Act led to the successful development of hundreds of thousands of non-profit and co-operative housing. The federal government identified co-operative housing in Canada as a "best practice" at Habitat II, the United Nations' global conference on housing and human settlements in 1996 in Istanbul.

The KEY ISSUE here: Money. The One Percent Solution.

There is always money and tax benefits for most everyone/everything else (mainly people/groups with higher socio-economic status).

Prevention and elimination of HLN requires enough money for:

- (1) adequate housing;
- (2) the necessary support services; and
- (3) adequate social assistance.

OUR NATIONAL CAMPAIGN: The One Percent Solution

- ❑ **Affordable**: the One Percent Solution is affordable, about 50 cents per taxpayer per day.
- ❑ **A modest but important proposal**: set against the huge and growing need for affordable housing and services, the One Percent Solution is a modest but important solution.
- ❑ **Mainly 'catch-up' spending**: in real terms, the One Percent Solution is in fact only replacing the huge amount of money cut out of housing and related programs by the Mulroney government in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- ❑ **Funding for all 3 parts of the solution**: Phasing in the additional spending over a 3 to 5 year period, the funds would supply (1) adequate housing, (2) adequate support services, and adequate social assistance -- thereby ending mass homelessness in Canada.
- ❑ **The One Percent Solution will Eliminate and prevent mass homelessness.**

Where's the Money? Here's the Money!

On Wednesday, July 28, the National Disaster Relief Network issued a press release under the headline: "Where's the money" -- in reference to the need for public re-investment in housing programs and adequate support services or those who need them.

On Friday, the Toronto Star's business section, under the headline "Federal surplus hits \$3.4 billion," the Canadian Press reported that "Ottawa recorded an estimated \$3.4 billion surplus in the first two months of this fiscal year alone." Part of that \$3.4 billion, only two months of surplus, could end Canada's homelessness disaster by funding the One Percent Solution.

Much more than one percent

**has been removed from the most important forms of assistance
for the most vulnerable Canadians**

- ❑ The Mulroney government cut \$1.8 billion in housing and related programs from 1984 to 1993, then cancelled all new development under federal social housing programs, creating huge "gaps" in funding
- ❑ The federal government announced in 1996 plans to transfer administration of federal social housing programs to the province, creating another huge "gap" as Canada no longer would have a national housing program.
- ❑ On the provincial side, the Harris government cut funding and new development after it was elected in 1995, creating huge "gaps" on the provincial side.
- ❑ In 1998, the Harris government downloaded the cost of provincial social housing programs to municipalities, and announced that it would download administration in the near future.
- ❑ The Harris government also said that it would download federal social housing programs once a federal-provincial social housing transfer deal is signed with Ottawa.
- ❑ The federal-provincial transfer, and the provincial-municipal download, has created a huge "gap" in housing policy and programs.



What happens to the 'findings' of your HLN tour?

- ☐ A secret report is unacceptable.
- ☐ Many homeless Canadians, many other people and many groups took the time to meet with you, to share with you their concerns and advice.
- ☐ The minimum you can do is summarize what you heard and what you learned.
- ☐ It is unethical to provide no public summary of what you heard and learned. You are a public official, using public funds, interviewing and observing the most destitute and vulnerable people in Canada. People and organizations have given their time and expertise fully and freely.
- ☐ You can table a confidential/internal report to Cabinet. But there must be feedback to the people you have heard from.

Historical Note

Your tour is the third national housing tour by a Liberal MP

1969: Paul Hellyer (with Lloyd Axworthy assisting), on housing and urban renewal;
-- most recommendations were implemented with the 1973 NHA amendments

1989: Paul Martin, on housing

1999: Claudette Bradshaw, on homelessness

In each case the housing situation had become much worse, to the extent that your tour is actually about people without housing. The others were about people with inadequate housing.

The first two produced reports that helped better inform Canadians about the important issues and potential solutions.

2. INFORMATION

A) The national disaster relief network has been established.

- ❑ first teleconference call included Vancouver, Edmonton, London, Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa and Halifax.
- ❑ new partners emerging in Victoria, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Montreal, St. John and St. John's.
- ❑ outreach is continuing in other centres.
- ❑ joint press release issued on Wednesday in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax (as well as nationally).
- ❑ local activities are being planned in a number of communities for October 2nd, a day dedicated to promoting the One Percent Solution under the banner "housing for all."
- ❑ the many local committees and the national network are mounting political pressure on Liberal and Opposition Members of Parliament.
- ❑ street-level organizing is continuing throughout the network (including Halifax, Toronto and Vancouver).

B) Human Rights: This is *the* human rights issue of our day.

- ❑ We will soon announce our legal strategy: there are 'homeless makers' and 'homeless making processes' in Canada responsible for the continuation of this most fundamental human rights violation.

C) Fall & Winter: The unnecessary human suffering and the political turmoil will be unlike anything yet.

- ❑ Nothing has happened over the past year to stop the increase in the number of HL Canadians. Families with children are the fast growing group due to the extreme shortage of affordable housing.
- ❑ Many Canadians have been calling for action for many years.
- ❑ Many municipalities and the FCM's Big City Mayors have endorsed the disaster declaration and the One Percent Solution.
- ❑ Remedial measures should have been put in place by now.

Fax

July 21, 1999

To: 'Letters to the Editor,' Moncton Times & Transcript. cc: TDRC

From: David Hulchanski, *Professor of Housing and Community Development*

Re: Your Editorial: "Bradshaw's Solid Stand"

21 July 1999

To the Editor, Moncton Times and Transcript

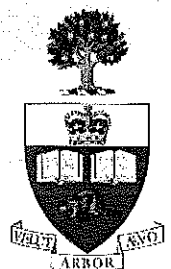
I was surprised by your July 20 editorial, "Bradshaw's Stand Solid." Someone is misrepresenting the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee's call for Parliamentary hearings.

These are the hearings the Government of Canada, just three months ago, promised the United Nations they would hold.

On April 7, 1999 the UN Human Rights Committee released a highly critical report on Canada's domestic human rights record. Death and serious health problems due to homelessness is explicitly highlighted.

On March 15 the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee presented a brief to the Committee in NY. This report, which I helped write, is available at the TDRC website:
<http://www.tao.ca/~tdrc/UNREP2.htm#UNrep>

At issue is Article 6 of the human rights Covenant: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." There can be no right more basic than this.



July 21, 1999

The UN report states: "The Committee is concerned that homelessness has led to serious health problems and even to death. The Committee recommends that the State party take positive measures required by article 6 to address this serious problem." The full text of this UN report is available on the Internet: <http://povnet.web.net/UNdoc.html>

During the UN hearings the Canadian delegation told the Committee that official parliamentary hearings will be held on any areas of concern the Committee identifies.

To help remind Canada to keep its promise, the UN report explicitly refers to the promise. "The Committee welcomes the delegation's commitment to take action to ensure effective follow-up in Canada of the Committee's concluding observations.... In particular, the Committee welcomes the [Canadian] delegation's commitment to inform public opinion in Canada about the Committee's concerns and recommendations ... and to ensure that a parliamentary committee will hold hearings of issues arising from the Committee's observations."

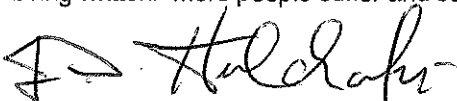
This is what Cathy Crowe, on behalf of the TDRC, is referring to in your July 20 news article ("Bradshaw Rejects Notion of Hearings").

According to your editorial, Bradshaw seems to be claiming that Toronto 'special interest groups' like the TDRC want to put everything on hold until there is yet another study -- a lot more talk (like taking a national tour, for example).

The opposite is the case: the hearings are about inaction on a well known crisis -- leading to explicit courses of action. They are about taking "action to ensure effective follow-up." This is what Canada promised the United Nations. This is what many individuals and groups are calling for -- not just Toronto's "special interest groups."

It is sad to see Ms Bradshaw, an inexperienced junior minister, with no power and no clout, throwing away the fine reputation she earned in Moncton. She has allowed the Prime Minister to use her fine former reputation to make it appear the government cares.

You need to face the facts: she has allowed herself to become a flak catcher for the 'big boys' in the Cabinet. She is becoming a national joke. Her place in the history of this unnecessary human tragedy is being written. More people suffer and some are dying due to the inaction of her government..



J.D. Hulchanski, Professor
Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto
(a founding member of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee)

Times Transcript

The Moncton Times and Transcript
Editorial Wednesday, July 21, 1999 D7

Bradshaw's stand solid

LENGTH: Short

Claudette **Bradshaw** has taken a tough stand against special interest groups in Toronto. She's sticking to her guns and insisting that their call for another federal government study on the issue of **homelessness** is not the proper course of action at this time.

The Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe MP, who has been asked by her government to address Canada's homeless problem, is to be commended for refusing to be sidetracked. It takes courage, when the eyes of the nation are on you, to strike out and attack a task with the convictions of your instincts, your personal experience, and your training.

And that is what she is doing. She is currently touring the country, meeting not just with provincial and municipal government representatives, but with agencies who serve the less fortunate and the working poor and the homeless themselves.

There is much to be said for **Bradshaw's** approach. It's the kind of get-down-and-get-your-hands-dirty style that always served her well when she made a difference in countless lives as the executive director of Moncton Headstart. The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, clamouring for parliamentary hearings and more studies on the issue, may have the right motive in their hearts, but we suggest **Bradshaw** is taking the more common sense approach.

The poor and the hungry cannot afford to wait while still more bureaucrats in comfortable offices write still more studies that are read by comfortable people in comfortable board rooms. The minister and her support staff, the people who will ultimately make the recommendations on how to alleviate some of their distress, are serving them better by getting out off their Parliamentary seats and into the streets for a first-hand look at the situation.

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Date sent: **Thu, 29 Jul 1999 12:07:11**
To: **tdrc@hotmail.com, ccrowe@ctchc.com, crowe@web.net**
From: **Michael Shapcott <mshapcot@web.net>**
Subject: **Meeting with Minister on Saturday**

Here are my impressions of the meeting with Minister Bradshaw, plus some suggestions for action as we prepare for our Saturday meeting.

At the meeting were about 30 people. The event was chaired by Mark Guslits, and attendees included Joanne Campbell (City of Toronto), Robin Campbell (ONPHA), Brigitte Witkowski (Supportive Housing Coalition), Mike Labbe (Options for Homes), Reva Jewell (Council Fire), Cathy Crowe (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee), Mike But (But Construction), Peter Zimmerman (Jack Layton's housing aide) plus some others whose names I didn't get.

There was a huge turnout of Minister's staff, including Germaine Laporte (head of the homelessness secretariat), Peter Brander (policy assistant to the Minister), Jamey Burr (seconded from CMHC), plus at least half a dozen other Ottawa and Toronto HRDC staffers. Minister Bradshaw's husband was also there. Tony Iano (MP for Trinity-Spadina) was also there.

After introductions, I jumped in with the first presentation. I handed the Minister the briefing package that I had prepared (copies already given to Dale and George), outlined the \$2 billion in housing funding cut by the Mulroney government, then cancellation of the entire program in terms of new building. I noted the provincial disinvestment since 1995 and said that with all this money and program cuts, it's no wonder we have a housing crisis. I pointed to the Martin-Fontana study and urged Bradshaw to push for a massive re-investment in housing and related programs.

Her response was incredibly weak. She pointed to the 19 departments and agencies with a piece of the homelessness pie, and suggested that money might be re-allocated, etc.

Mike Labbe was next. He was so shameless in over-promoting his cheap condominium project that even Joanne and Robin were shaking their heads in disgust. Mike said that he could take people out of the Fred Victor shelter for the homeless and turn them into homeowners. He even said people "of any income" could buy into the project. It was astonishing, truly astonishing.

Joanne gave an effective, though somewhat guarded presentation. She said that the city wanted more RRAP money. She said that the city was doing everything it could and pointed to the \$10 million revolving capital fund recently established. She called on the feds to put money into capital.

There were a number of general presentations from Robin and others.

Then Cathy gave a powerful intervention. She talked about the people she sees in her nursing clinic - the T.B., the cases of starvation. She outlined the enormity of the homelessness disaster in very personal terms and called on the federal government to respond in a substantial way. There was an interchange between Cathy and the Minister which was terribly moving and very effective in highlighting the devastating reality of homelessness.

Tony Iano intervened several times in an exceptionally whiny manner. He complained that Mel Lastman was always beating up on Minister Bradshaw, Maria Minna and others. He said that the feds were not getting credit for the work that they were doing.

Brigitte talked about the huge need for supportive housing and directly challenged Labbe's notion that he could turn homeless people into homeowners in one easy step.

Both Peter Zimmerman and Mark Guslits (who are collaborating on a small project - 40-units I believe - in the east end of downtown Toronto) outlined their work on this project, the huge amount of difficulty and years of work to bring this small project to completion.

I gave the final pitch the Minister, returning to my opening theme. I noted that we could all work on innovative projects (like the Zimmerman-Guslits one), spend years and produce a handful of units. But that was nothing as set against the huge and growing need. I emphasized that the feds and province have to get back into the housing business in a significant way. There is no way to nibble around the fringes, considering the severity of the housing crisis. I pointed to the numbers in the Where's Home study (based on CMHC numbers) which project a need for 80,000 new rental units in Ontario by 2001, while the private sector will only be able to deliver 6,000 at most. I underlined the need for major new programs.

Minister Bradshaw seemed rather peeved at this point. In her wrap-up, and in a hurried conversation in the hallway after the main meeting, she seemed to think that the call for major re-investment was somehow a political attack on the Liberals or on her personally. I have been very careful in all my written and oral communications to pitch the issue as a political problem and not personally attack the government or particular Ministers, such as Bradshaw. However, as I said to her in the hallway, there's no way around the basic problem: we need more money for housing in Canada. And the feds have to ante up some of that cash.

My suggestions for our meeting with Minister Bradshaw:

1) I think that we have to be tightly focused. It is clear that the Minister doesn't like or appreciate our political message, but we have to deliver it to her. We must meet (in person or by phone) before the Saturday meeting to work out our script.

I think that the key messages for the Minister should be:

- 1) The Mulroney government made massive cuts to housing spending (my paper, building on work from Prof. Carter in Winnipeg, quantifies the cuts at about \$2 billion, plus the cancellation of new development in 1992-93).
- 2) The Chretien government needs to make a massive re-investment. There may have been reasons in the early years of the Chretien government (1993 onwards) that prevented them from major new spending. But the deficit is licked and the homelessness disaster and housing crisis has grown to disastrous proportions. It requires a substantial response.
- 3) The homelessness disaster is a political issue. It won't be solved by shuffling existing funding from one HRDC envelope to another. We need massive new funds.
- 4) TDRC and our allies across the country are committed to fighting this issue politically. We are working to build support among MPs, we are working to bring increased visibility to the issue, and we aren't about to let up in our advocacy work. Minister Bradshaw, who seems to be trying to personalize a political fight, should realize that we are firmly committed to taking whatever action is required to ensure effective solutions.

- Michael

Michael Shapcott
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E-mail - mshapcot@web.net